



# CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE

June 1, 2004

## **S. 144**

### **Noxious Weed Control Act of 2003**

*As ordered reported by the House Committee on Resources on May 19, 2004*

#### **SUMMARY**

S. 144 would direct the Secretary of Agriculture to establish a program to provide grants to states and Indian tribes to support projects to control or eradicate noxious weeds on public and private lands. CBO estimates that the proposed program would cost \$10 million in 2005 and \$139 million over the 2005-2009 period, assuming appropriation of the necessary amounts. Enacting the legislation would not affect direct spending or revenues.

S. 144 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act (UMRA) and would impose no costs on state, local, or tribal governments. Any costs incurred by those governments to comply with the conditions of this assistance would be voluntary.

#### **ESTIMATED COST TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT**

For this estimate, we assume S. 144 will be enacted near the start of fiscal year 2005 and that authorized amounts will be provided as specified by the act. The estimated budgetary impact of S. 144 is shown in the following table. The costs of this legislation fall within budget function 300 (natural resources and environment).

	By Fiscal Year, in Millions of Dollars				
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
<b>CHANGES IN SPENDING SUBJECT TO APPROPRIATION</b>					
Estimated Authorization Level	55	55	55	55	55
Estimated Outlays	10	18	28	38	45

## **BASIS OF ESTIMATE**

S. 144 would authorize the appropriation of \$50 million a year over the 2005-2009 period for the Secretary of Agriculture to make grants to states and Indian tribes to fund projects to study, control, or eradicate noxious weeds on public and private lands. Based on historical spending patterns for similar activities, CBO estimates that those activities would cost \$5 million in 2005 and \$114 million over the 2005-2009 period, with additional spending occurring in later years. Estimates of outlays are based on historical spending patterns for similar activities.

Section 10 would authorize the Secretary to provide financial assistance to states to mitigate particularly threatening outbreaks of noxious weeds. According to the Forest Service, the agency already provides such assistance under current law, subject to requirements that states pay for a portion of the cost of such activities. S. 144 would allow the Secretary to pay up to 100 percent of those costs. Based on information from the Forest Service, CBO estimates that the total cost of those activities is about \$10 million a year, and that states pay roughly half of those costs. Hence, we estimate that authorizing the Secretary to fully fund those projects could increase federal spending by as much as \$5 million a year, assuming the availability of appropriated funds.

## **INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND PRIVATE-SECTOR IMPACT**

S. 144 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in UMRA and would impose no costs on state, local, or tribal governments. Any costs incurred by those governments to comply with the conditions of this assistance would be voluntary.

## **PREVIOUS CBO ESTIMATE**

On February 7, 2003, CBO transmitted a cost estimate for S. 144 as ordered reported by the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources on February 5, 2003. Both versions of S. 144 would authorize funds for grants to states and tribes for projects related to noxious weeds. The House Committee on Resources' version of S. 144 would authorize less funding for such grants; hence our estimate of spending under that version is less. Further differences result because the House Committee on Resources' version of S. 144 would authorize a change in the cost-sharing requirements for financial assistance to states to help control particularly threatening outbreaks of noxious weeds.

**ESTIMATE PREPARED BY:**

Federal Costs: Megan Carroll

Impact on State, Local, and Tribal Governments: Majorie Miller

Impact on the Private Sector: Selena Caldera

**ESTIMATE APPROVED BY:**

Robert A. Sunshine

Assistant Director for Budget Analysis